

Emancipation of the Papiamentu Language (*from language of the slaves to language of the future*)

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Papiamentu is an Atlantic creole language and it is the national language of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao (the ABC Islands). It is a language born and developed in slavery and as the slaves, it had to struggle to gain its emancipation. Like most Caribbean territories, the ABC Islands are multilingual, involving the local language (Papiamentu), the colonial language (Dutch), and the languages of former colonizers and migrant populations (English and Spanish).

Slavery and Papiamentu

The Portuguese were the early pioneers of African exploration in the fifteenth century. They set up trading posts along the west coast of Africa and established trading settlements along the way. When they got captives, these would remain in a fort awaiting a ship that would take them to the New World for sale. It was not unusual that slaves would have to wait for months before a ship was available. Many slaves were given work training and religious instruction. This instruction also included a measure of Portuguese language teaching. Many believe that this period of captivity in the forts led to an Afro-Portuguese pidgin being formed.

Soon after the conquest of Curaçao by the Dutch in 1634, the Dutch West India Company (W.I.C.) sought to enlarge its manpower by bringing blacks from prize ships to Curaçao. The import of slaves started only after the conquest of the Portuguese strongholds in Angola in 1641, and Curaçao became a slave depot. The populating of Curaçao really seems to have started around 1660. The rapid development of plantations was also furthered by the enterprise of the Portuguese Jews, who started to arrive in Curaçao around 1660. This activity required slaves and the second West India Company allowed the colonists to buy slaves from its *deposito* and export them. On the island itself there were in 1697 around 2400 Company slaves and the total number of slaves owned by private persons was 3500. So the total slave population was about 6000.

As a Portuguese creole Papiamentu developed amongst several other Afro-Portuguese dialects brought to Curaçao soon after the Dutch conquest in 1634. In Curaçao Papiamentu (*the language of the slaves*) underwent Dutch influence, nearly 30% of the Papiamentu vocabulary being now of Dutch descent. Later on the influence of the Spanish speaking environment caused hispanization of part of the lexicon. It's assumed that as early as the end of the 17th century Papiamentu had acquired native speakers both under the Dutch and the Jewish population.

Origin of Papiamentu

For many years scholars have been discussing the origin of the Papiamentu language. Dr. Efraim Frank Martinus (1997: 12) gives five main hypotheses about the genesis of

Papiamentu. The author of the present article adheres to the Proto-Afro-Portuguese creole hypothesis, which states that Papiamentu originates from a so-called Proto-creole language, that anticipated the Afro-Portuguese creole, which was born on the Western coast of Africa, as a result of the contacts between the Portuguese and the different groups there. This theory gives us the best basis for believing that Papiamentu has an African-European origin. The author's opinion is based on two empiric facts and new theoretical lights shed about the genesis of Papiamentu:

Firstly, many years ago people who worked in the Lago Refinery in Aruba informed that they heard Papiamentu spoken aboard oil tankers entering the harbor of the refinery. However, later the author learned that it was *Kabuverdianu*, a creole language from Cape-Verde.

Secondly, in 1976 the author met Antonio Macedo from Cape-Verde, with whom he had a number of conversations, in which Macedo spoke Kabuverdianu and the author spoke Papiamentu, and they could understand each other for up to 80%. In August 2014 the author had the same experience with Dr. Manuel Veiga, which attested his beliefs.

New light was shed on this question from an investigation of the Dutch scholar Dr. Bart Jacobs. In his doctoral dissertation *Origins of a Creole - The History of Papiamentu and Its African Ties*, Dr. Jacobs embarks on the intriguing quest for the origins of Papiamentu. This study casts new and long-lasting light on the issue, putting forward compelling interdisciplinary evidence in a detailed historical framework that Papiamentu is genetically related to the Portuguese-based creoles of the Cape Verde Islands, Guinea-Bissau, and Casamance (Senegal).

This corroborates the author's opinion that Papiamentu is a language, which emerged from an Afro-Portuguese source. It was brought to Curaçao by the slaves, it evolved here in its own way and later on spread to Aruba and Bonaire, becoming the national language of these three Dutch islands as well as the mother tongue of its inhabitants.

Evolution of Papiamentu

Papiamentu rapidly became, in the first instance, the language of the people of Curaçao and afterwards the general language of the other two islands. In the 17th century the population of Curaçao consisted of four ethnic groups: the Dutch Protestant upper class, the Portuguese Jewish upper class, who first arrived in Curaçao in 1654, the Caquetio indigenous population and the slaves who were subjugated by and were in contact with the upper class groups and the Caquetios. Because of their native language, the Dutch and the Jews couldn't communicate with each other. As a result, the two groups, the Portuguese Jews and the Dutch Protestants, made use of *the language of the slaves*, as they themselves called it, to communicate. Contrary to what usually happens, the upper class did not impose its language on the lower class, nor did the colonizers impose their language on the country they colonized. This is an important reason why Papiamentu very quickly became the language of the whole population.

The Dutch

As said before, in the 1640s the Dutch, represented by the W.I.C., began importing Africans who came from various tribes, and who spoke various languages. In terms of

the language situation, it may be stated that the Dutch-speaking population had no interest in teaching the Dutch language to their slaves, just as the Dutch Reformed Church was not interested in converting the slaves to Christianity. It was not until the mid-19th century that the Dutch began to take an interest in the spread of their language in the colonies. Dutch was, of course, the official language of the colonial administration. However, over the years of Dutch colonial rule, with many officials bringing their families with them from the Netherlands, the children of those families began being exposed to the local language. Thus, Papiamentu was not just the language of the blacks, but would become the language of all native-born Antilleans: blacks, whites and indians. In fact, as time evolved, the Dutch language would find itself in the position of being the official language of law, government and the classroom, and not much else.

The Jews

In the Netherlands, the Jews continued to speak an Iberian vernacular (generally Portuguese) long after leaving the peninsula. Though Portuguese (due to the numbers of Sephardics arriving from Portugal) eventually replaced Spanish as the spoken language of the Jews in the Netherlands as early as the 17th century, Spanish remained as the written language of Jewish literary publications due to its higher cultural prestige. As late as the 19th century, Portuguese was spoken by Jews in the Netherlands. As a result, the refugee Jews were long referred to as the Portuguese Jews.

Mr. Charles Gomes Casseres has described the early Jews of Curaçao as a Portuguese-speaking group who *significantly influenced the formation of the local language Papiamentu*. While the Jews had an interdependent relationship with the Dutch Protestants, social relations were formal. The Jews were prominent in international trade, while the Dutch Protestants made up the civil service, colonial administration and military. The two groups found themselves divided by religion, economic activities and language, Portuguese being still the principal language of the early Sephardic community. The late writer and sculptress, May Henriquez, who wrote many books and plays in Papiamentu, pointed out that the Iberian language background (Portuguese/Spanish) enabled the arriving Jews to assimilate rapidly into the local language (Papiamentu), and that they had a significant influence on the enrichment of Papiamentu. She also pointed out that the Jews arriving from the Netherlands generally did not speak Dutch.

The oldest surviving document written in Papiamentu is a fragment of a letter from a Curaçaoan Jew written to his mistress in 1775. It is interesting to note that the language used in the letter is very close to present-day Papiamentu. The fragment in question is part of anonymous letters written in Papiamentu, that surfaced incriminating Abraham de David da Costa Andrade Jr. in a marital dispute within the Jewish community of Curaçao (the Andrade case).

In summary, it should be reiterated that the Jews were a cosmopolitan lot who were comfortable in more than one language, which also made them valuable as interpreters. Eventually, Papiamentu took hold within this community as well. Some scholars assign a major role to the Portuguese-speaking Jews who immigrated to Curaçao in the formation of Papiamentu. Other researchers are of the judgment that since they were greatly outnumbered by the slaves on Curaçao, it was more likely that the Jews learned

Papiamentu from the slaves than vice versa. Others have also pointed out that the Portuguese-speaking Jews gave up their own language for Papiamentu. A possible explanation for this was that the Jews were a small portion of the population; thus, it was possible that their own language was absorbed into a related language (Papiamentu). A member of the Sephardic community has pointed out that the Jews had a variety of first languages depending on their origin, and as a result, a *highly latinized Papiamentu* evolved into the lingua franca among the community itself, eventually becoming the language of the home. According to another member, by the end of the 18th century, many Jews were speaking Papiamentu at home.

The Roman Catholic Church

In the activities of the Catholic Church Prefect Martinus Joannes Niewindt played a prominent role in the promotion of the Papiamentu language as well as in the emancipation of the slaves. One of his first publications in Papiamentu (1825) was as a matter of fact the first book published in Papiamentu, *Catecismo pa uso di Catholicanan di Corsou* (Catechism for the use of Curaçao's Catholics). In addition to this publication, there exist two other publications by Niewindt, *Prefecto Apostolico di Curaçao na Cristian di su mision* (The Apostolic Prefect of Curaçao to the Christians of his mission), published in 1833 - now known as the oldest publication in Papiamentu. In the course of the 19th century and afterwards there were many more publications by the Catholic Church favouring the emancipation of Papiamentu, of which a very important one is *Woordenlijst der in de landstaal van Curaçao meest gebruikelijke woorden met Zamenspraken* (List of the most used words in the vernacular of Curaçao with Dialogues) by Bernardus Th.J. Frederiks & Jacobus J. Putman, published in 1859, the first published vocabulary of Papiamentu. The fact that the Catholic Church educated the slaves in Papiamentu, publishing books in Papiamentu, caused the language to develop and to eventually become a language of high status for the entire population.

The Protestant Church

In 1858 Rev. Nicolaas Adrianus Kuiperi took his duties as Aruba's first Protestant minister. He soon realized that few people in Aruba spoke Dutch and that he would need to learn Papiamentu in order to deliver his sermons. In 1862 Rev. Kuiperi published *Katekismoe of Sienjansa di Berdad i di Mandameentoe nan di Religioon di Kristiaan nan pa oesoe di Protestant nan na Aruba* (Catechism or Teaching of the Truth and of the Commandments of the Christian religion for the use of Aruba's Protestants). Probably the first Protestant religious publication in Papiamentu. We may assume that the publication of texts in Papiamentu by both the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Church was a motivation for the recognition of Papiamentu as a valuable language in all strata of the population.

The Yayas (Nannies)

Another important factor in the evolution of Papiamentu as general language was the existence of the *yayas*, the black nannies who helped run the households of the white officials and their families, either as slaves or as free workers subsequent to emancipation in 1863. These women played a highly significant role in helping to raise the white children with the effect that the children grew up with a facility in Papiamentu.

Like the Dutch, Jewish families utilized these *yayas*, who nursed and cared for the children and who were considered a member of the family, passing along Papiamentu to the children. This exposure to the slave language, in addition to its rather obligatory use by the parents (the masters), also had much influence on the children, leading them to accept Papiamentu as their own language. One has to take into account that the *yaya*, due to the affective relation with the children of the *shon* (the master), always played a very important role in their education. She may be considered as the affective link between white and black, and an important factor in the development of many cultural characteristics of the ABC islands.

Because of the three phenomena mentioned before: the colonizers adopting the language of the slaves, the slaves being educated in Papiamentu by the Catholic church and the children of the ruling class being brought up almost solely by the Papiamentu-speaking *yayas*, Papiamentu evolved as no other creole language has evolved: very soon it became the language of the entire population, with a high status. There is still another phenomenon one has to take into account when dealing with the evolution of Papiamentu: its relation with the indigenous language of the ABC islands, the Caquetio language.

The indigenous language

The indigenous language spoken on the islands was Caquetio, an Arawak language. The first African slaves and freed slaves were in contact with these Caquetio Indians. Even though they were not very numerous, indigenous people were therefore definitely present and part of the substratum when Papiamentu emerged. There are numerous examples of contacts between people of indigenous and African descent, during the late 17th and the 18th century, found in early records of the Catholic Church. Father Michael Alexis Schabel, a Jesuit missionary, also mentions in his *Diurnum* (Diary) of 1707/08 baptisms of Indian children where blacks were present or acted as one of the godparents.

In 1743 many of the remaining indigenous people on Curaçao moved to Coro (Venezuela). Although some Indians remained, this last emigration may have ended the presence of Indians as a separate group. In Aruba and Bonaire they maintained their identity as a separate group somewhat longer. Several of the surviving Caquetio words in Papiamentu come from these two islands. There were many contacts between the Caquetios from Curaçao and those from Alto Vista in Aruba.

The Caquetio influence in Papiamentu is small, but there are definitely a few original Caquetio words in Papiamentu: these are, generally, names of local plants and animals and toponyms. Several of these words are only used on either Aruba or Bonaire (or sometimes on both) where there was a stronger Caquetio presence. Even though Papiamentu primarily developed on Curaçao it must also have been influenced by speakers from the other two islands.

Bearing in mind that Papiamentu emerged and evolved, in the first instance, in Curaçao, we may conclude that Papiamentu originated as an Afro-Portuguese lingua franca on the West coast of Africa, was brought to Curaçao where it further developed, and later

on spread to Aruba and to Bonaire for its subsequent development on all three islands, undergoing through time the necessary influences of all ethnic groups up to the present.

Abolition of Slavery

During the 19th century it became apparent to the Europeans that slavery could not continue indefinitely. The English persuaded the Dutch to sign a bilateral agreement prohibiting slave traffic. This did not abolish the practice of slavery in the Dutch colonies. Real abolitionist sentiment in the Netherlands did not begin to materialize until the 1840s. This abolitionist sentiment dealt with the fact that slavery still existed in the colonies. As the other European powers abolished slavery (England in 1834 and France in 1848), the Dutch realized that it had to end for them as well. In September of 1862, the bill on emancipation in the Dutch colonies was passed into law, to take effect on July 1st 1863. On that date, a proclamation of the king was publicly read in Willemstad, Curaçao, in Dutch and in Papiamentu. As compensation, the government paid a sum of 200 florins for each slave to the owners. Unfortunately there was no compensation for the slaves themselves, except that now they were free.

Papiamentu and Education in Curaçao and Bonaire

Initially, the W.I.C. funded a few public schools that were reserved for a handful of white Protestants. Other language groups and religious denominations provided for their own education. A small number of free blacks received education from Roman Catholic missionaries in Papiamentu, whereas slaves were initially excluded from education and barred from learning Dutch. However, slaves were allowed to receive religious instruction from the Roman Catholic mission which eventually transformed itself into a formal education program for the slaves.

According to a letter written in 1849 by Father Jacobus Johannes Putman, who had a school in the parish of Santa Rosa in Curaçao where all classes were taught in Papiamentu, there were about 500 boys and girls attending this school on a more or less regular basis. This situation did not change after the slaves got their freedom in 1863. After the abolition of slavery all education of the freed slaves was still in Papiamentu.

The first provisory governmental directive for education appeared in 1819 and in 1884, a second directive followed. In the new ordinance of 1935 Papiamentu was permitted in Catholic and other non-public schools, but permission had to be granted by the governor. In 1936, when the Netherlands finally banned all discrimination based on religion, Roman Catholic schools were able to obtain funding and expand their operations. The only condition was that they had to use Dutch as their medium of instruction. Although there were still advocates for the use of Papiamentu in education, from this point on the influence of Dutch on education continued to grow.

The general acceptance of Dutch as the sole medium of instruction started to wane in the 1960s, when both local teachers and principals started to outnumber European-born teachers and principals. Through their trade unions, these locals became a powerful political voice, criticizing the educational situation that disadvantaged local children because they had to learn to read and write through a foreign language, Dutch. Several publications that appeared in the 60s and 70s strongly identified with Papiamentu and denounced the negative impact of Dutch-medium education on students' learning and

general performance. An important event that led to the population's greater identification with Papiamentu was the social uprising of May 30th 1969.

One of the major publications is the book *Cabes Duro?* (Blockhead?), published in 1973 by Mrs. A.C. (Nelly) Prins-Winkel. The title refers to the wrong idea that Papiamentu-speaking children are stupid, because they don't study well in Dutch. But, this may be attributed to the fact that Dutch is offered as if it were their mother tongue, while their mother tongue is Papiamentu. Before Mrs. Prins-Winkel published her book, a governmental commission published a report in 1970 strongly recommending the introduction of Papiamentu as language of instruction, as did the Unesco afterwards, in 1976.

The ordinances for pre-primary and primary education of 1979 which aimed to make Papiamentu the language of instruction in pre-primary and in grades 1 and 2 of primary school (article 9) were supposed to resolve the language problems. The ordinance for primary education was accepted in 1979. But article 9, which relates to language use in primary schools, did not become operational, due to differences of opinion between the stakeholders.

The controversy was resolved in 1982 when the Minister of Education finally agreed to allow the use of Papiamentu as a medium of instruction and as a subject in grades 1 through 6 in all primary schools in Curaçao and Bonaire. The island territories signed an agreement of cooperation for the introduction of Papiamentu, setting goals in relation to both short and long term language policies. In the short term, a language program was developed to teach Papiamentu as a subject in primary schools starting in 1986. The program was applied in grades 1 through 6. Children were taught to read and write in Dutch. Reading and writing in Papiamentu received very little attention in grades 1-2 and only fully started in grade 3. The introduction of Papiamentu as the medium of instruction in primary schools became part of a long-term language policy. The two islands remained in close cooperation in matters related to this issue.

The fact that Papiamentu was an ungraded subject also contributed to its low status in schools. By contrast, Dutch continued to be seen as 'difficult' because proficiency in Dutch determined children's access to secondary school. Papiamentu was an obligatory subject, yet it was not taught in all grades. Some schools even went so far as to disregard the teaching of Papiamentu entirely and instead dedicated more time to Dutch. The acceptance of the ordinance of 1979 did not change the daily practice in the classroom, except in the case of *Kolegio Erasmo*, which was founded in 1987.

The parents of the enrolled students wanted *a creative school in Papiamentu* and asked permission to start one under the provisions of the much discussed article 9 of the ordinance for primary education. With all its ups and downs *Kolegio Erasmo* has at present about 440 pupils (20 in pre-kindergarten, 40 in Kindergarten, 160 in primary school, and 220 in high school). The humanist school board is currently trying to set up a 5 to 6 year high school at the most advanced level (pre-university training) and will then become the first and only school in the ABC islands that teaches in Papiamentu from kindergarten to high school throughout their entire curriculum.

In 1994 the federal government got actively involved in the process of educational reform. The framework that was selected was *Foundation-based Education*, which involved a ten year period of innovation, and was developed by local education professionals as a means to decouple the Antillean education from the Dutch system,

while maintaining a link with it through secondary education. During the ten year period the language of instruction of all schools would be Papiamentu on Curaçao and Bonaire, and Dutch would be taught as a subject and as a foreign language. Native children would then get a chance to develop their language skills in Dutch for a period of ten consecutive years.

The island territories of Curaçao and Bonaire, seeing that there was no movement towards a resolution of the language problem, proceeded to implement Foundation-based Education starting in kindergarten in 2001, without awaiting the federal government's final decision. In March 2007, however, the then Minister of Education changed the proposed language policy of Foundation-based Education considerably, transferring the authority to determine the language of instruction to the school boards. The federal government's way of handling the legislation on the use of Papiamentu shows an overall lack of commitment to a 'national' language policy and actually discouraged the use of Papiamentu in education. The school boards of Curaçao promptly changed the language policy in their schools in the school year of 2006/2007 from Papiamentu to Dutch, prior to the moment of legislation (in 2008), alleging that the island territory had not provided enough school materials for the second cycle of Foundation-based Education. The Roman Catholic schools tried to revert to the 'old' situation and arrived at a situation 'in between'. At present, of the 28 Roman Catholic primary schools, one school teaches completely in Dutch and 27 are supposedly bilingual, 8 starting reading and writing in Papiamentu, and 19 starting reading and writing in Dutch. Public schools in Curaçao and two of the smaller school boards maintained Papiamentu as the language of instruction and teach Dutch as a subject. Yet a survey of the public school language policy in the class rooms shows that some schools are using a bilingual model similar to the one used by Roman Catholic schools. Of the 5 schools in Bonaire, 1 Roman Catholic school teaches in Dutch in all grades, whereas 4 teach in Papiamentu. There are however, efforts afoot to increase the level of Dutch.

Notwithstanding differences between bilingual models, all schools are supposed to meet the same standards and objectives in both Dutch and Papiamentu. In schools which teach in Dutch, Papiamentu is mandatory as a subject and in all schools which teach in Papiamentu, Dutch is a mandatory subject.

The postponement of a definite decision on the language policy for Foundation-based Education for a number of years (1996 to 2008) and the actual transfer of the authority of the federal government in 2008 to the school boards also suggest an impetus to discourage the use of Papiamentu as a language of instruction in primary education. The decisions of the federal government may have an effect on the short term, but they are certainly not the final outcome in relation to the role of Papiamentu in education.

Papiamentu and Education in Aruba

Generally the educational history of Aruba parallels that of Curaçao and Bonaire: it involves similar problems, solutions and outcomes. Aruba differs from Curaçao and Bonaire, however, to the extent that Papiamentu has not become a subject neither the language of instruction in primary schools. Since the 1950s kindergarten teachers had been using Papiamentu unofficially. It was only in 1992 that the use of Papiamentu next to Dutch became official policy. Special education teachers have been employing

Papiamentu since 1974 as the language of instruction for the children with certain learning disabilities. Ever since, special education has been one of the few branches of education using Papiamentu as its sole language of instruction. Currently, at the basic and intermediate vocational schools some subjects are also taught in Papiamentu and it appears as a subject matter. Since 2004 Papiamentu is also taught as a subject matter in secondary education.

For language in education in Aruba two documents are important: *Habri porta pa nos drenta* (Open the door for us to get in) and *Curiculo Idioma y Comunicacion* (Language and Communication Curriculum). The first document proposes a multilingual primary school - that includes two years of kindergarten and six years of elementary school - where students are exposed to the four languages that are important in Aruba: Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish. In this multilingual school Papiamentu will be the language of instruction, meaning that all subjects will be taught through Papiamentu. The second document describes the importance of Papiamentu - as first and second language - for the development of the cognitive academic language skills and the relations between Papiamentu and the three foreign languages.

Three of the conditions for success of the new school system are adequate school materials, well prepared teachers and involvement of the parents. Up to now the production of reading books has been reasonably successful. The production of a handbook of Papiamentu grammar will be finished in 2015. *Cristal* - a Papiamentu textbook series for secondary schools - has been a good experience that resulted in further collaboration with the *Fundashon pa Planifikashon di Idioma (FPI)* in Curaçao, also for the production of an integrated series for the first two years (kindergarten) of the first cycle of primary education.

Papiamentu teachers have been trained since the 1990s. Aruba has a team of about 25 teachers with a bachelor's degree in Papiamentu. In September 2013 a Master in Education in the four languages started at the *Instituto Pedagogico Arubano (IPA)* in collaboration with the University of Curaçao. In 2015 the great majority of the students will obtain a Master's degree in Papiamentu.

In 2007 the Minister of Education changed the original plan of eight years with Papiamentu as language of instruction to a new model with the following characteristics:

- Papiamentu is language of instruction from Kindergarten (K1) until the fourth grade of the elementary school (E4) and subject matter until E6.
- Dutch will be language of instruction in E5 and E6.
- Dutch, English and Spanish start in K1 with a special pedagogical approach called *familiarization*. Then they become subjects with systematic instruction: Dutch in E2, English in E4 and Spanish in E5.

The new school system also has to prove that the students perform better in Papiamentu and learn better Dutch. This is the main reason for embarking on a pilot project involving three schools that started in August 2009.

Within a language policy context, language is a means of communication, but it is also culture laden; it is the expression of a particular and unique speech community, with its own history, vision of the world, and system of values (esthetic and ethical). It is therefore a treasure accumulated through the ages, transmitted and enriched from one generation to the next. It is also part of a people's identification as a group. The

language of a people therefore cannot be forgotten, changed or given up for another more convenient one when considering its role in education (World Bank, June 2006). Benefits of first language instruction in a community where it is a minority language have also been emphasized by the European charter for regional and minority languages in a report by a Committee of Experts (Council of Europe, October 2009). These papers suggest that Papiamentu, being the language of the majority, should be cherished, protected and its use in education stimulated in order to enhance the development of the ABC islands' society and in order to help children reach their maximum educational potential.

Government policy plays a vital role in shaping the language ideologies of a society which in turn become an important force in determining whether or not a community abandons its ancestral language or comes to see it as a positive asset and a symbol of national identification. In fact, linguistic counter-identification tends to thrive when the use of a language is repressed. This can be noted in the reaction of schools, teachers and parents to the decision of the Roman Catholic school board in Curaçao to return to Dutch as the language of instruction in August 2008. None of the schools actually reverted completely to the old situation: they created a new one. The atmosphere on talk shows dedicated to the language issue over the last 5 years also gives the impression that parents are becoming less resistant to Papiamentu as a language of instruction, as their reactions to the recent changes have generally been more positive than negative, in both Bonaire and Curaçao.

In the last 5 years about 75 to 100 teachers have finished a course on Papiamentu language at bachelor level and work as teachers or language consultants in different schools and government agencies on the ABC islands. The efforts of these Papiamentu teachers as well as the input of other professionals are helping the community to understand the necessity of the innovative processes at hand, and are actively influencing the final outcome in this complex process of educational change.

Oral literature

Papiamentu has an oral literature which precedes and coexists with written literature. Oral literature in Papiamentu could be divided into *cantica* (songs) and *cuenta* (stories), and there are steady occasions which play a role, like the turn of the year, harvesting and in modern times, during the Carnival season (calypsos).

The only oral relic still existing from the aboriginal Caquetio population is an old Papiamentu rhyme from Aruba, which is still sung accompanied by modern music. From the slave era there are slaves' songs, like the *tambú* (which is still sung on all three islands, especially at the turn of the year). The *tambú* was developed by the slaves to communicate with each other while working, for the *shons* (masters) not to understand the message. Nowadays it is used to improvise about current issues and public secrets which happened during the year. Frequently the songs have a double meaning as is the case with calypsos, which are sung especially during the Carnival season, particularly in Aruba. Another typical Aruban traditional song is the *dande*, which is only played at the turn of the year. Also in this case current issues, like those related to politics, could be brought forward in an improvised way.

Storytelling has always been very popular on all islands. This tradition goes back to very early times, long before there was literature in written form. There were the storytellers,

who in numerous occasions, like *biloría* (funeral wake) and *ocho día* (eight-day vigil) would tell their stories. The *cuenta di Nanzi* (Ananse stories) are still very popular and have been compiled in written and digital form. These stories are about *Kompa Nanzi*, the spider, who generally uses his talent for trickery to obtain food or other earthly delights, but though greed, continually gets himself into trouble, from which he, in turn, must escape using trickery.

Written literature

An important milestone in the cultural development of the islands was the establishment of the weekly *Notas y letras, semanario de literatura y bellas artes* (1886-1888), which represented the first Curaçaoan publication exclusively dedicated to literature and music. Among the literary figures who published their works in *Notas y letras*, was the poet Joseph Sickman Corsen (1853-1911), who published the first Papiamentu written poem, *Atardi* (Evening) in 1905. With this poem, Corsen wanted to demonstrate that Papiamentu could be a suitable vehicle for poetic expression.

The first poem in Papiamentu in Aruba -with the same title as Corsen's-, *Atardi*, by Fечи Beaujon, appeared in 1907. After these publications many other original and translated literary works have been published in Papiamentu. The same may be said of songs, theatre pieces and other forms of art and cultural manifestations.

In the 1930s Willem E. Kroon, one of the early writers in Papiamentu, wrote several thesis novels in the language with a Roman Catholic message, as did Manuel Fraai, Miguel Suriel, Josef Sint Jago, Ernesto Petronia and a few others.

The advent of the Papiamentu literary and cultural magazine *Simadán* (1951), enabled a significant group of poets (the so called *Simadán* generation) to express themselves in their native language, although the magazine quickly went out of business.

Probably the most prominent of these writers was Pierre Lauffer (1920-1981), whom in 1944 published a collection of Papiamentu poems, *Patria* (Home Country/Fatherland), followed by *Kumbu* (Wildfire) in 1955, *Kantika pa bientu* (Songs for the Wind) in 1963 and *Lágrima i sonrisa* (Tears and Smiles) in 1973. Among his short stories are *Wiriwiri* in 1961, *Ñapa* (1961), and *Raspá* (1962). In 1971 he produced an anthology of Papiamentu literary writing *Di nos: antologia di nos literatura*. Lauffer is credited with making an important contribution to the development of Papiamentu as a language of poetry, and is considered by many to be the greatest Papiamentu poet.

Luis H. Daal (1919-1997) was a Curaçao poet, journalist and translator. He did not only write in the language, but championed its use and stressed the need for better sentence structure and word usage. His 1963 collection of poems *Kosecha di maloa* (Harvest of the Fast Growing Maize), was notable for its use of metaphors.

Elis Juliana (1927-2013) of Curaçao was one of the most prominent writers of the same generation. He wrote in his native language on themes connected with Curaçao. Like Lauffer, Juliana is noted for his use of the tonal aspects of Papiamentu. Between 1979-1988, he produced his 4-volume collection of Papiamentu poetry *Organisashon, Planifikashon, Independensia*. He is also known for his adaptation of the Japanese Haiku poetry into Papiamentu.

Another prominent Curaçaoan writer (of Jewish descent) was May Henriquez-Alvarez Correa (1915-1999). She produced plays in Papiamentu including *Laiza porko sushi*

(Laiza Dirty Pig), adapted from George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion", and *Kani mi, pa mi kani bo*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew".

Guillermo Rosario (1917-2003) was one of the most prolific authors of Curaçao. He has produced numerous novels, short stories and poems. In 1971 he wrote the poem *Mi Negrita papiamentu* (My Black Darling Papiamentu), comparing the language to black Antillean women.

Edward A. de Jongh (1923-2006) is noted for his short stories and poems in Papiamentu. Along with Stanley Cras, de Jongh translated Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince* in 1982 (*E Prens Chikí*). In 1970 he wrote a historical novel, *30 di mei 1969-e dia di mas histórico*, on the events of May 30th, 1969.

Nydia Ecury (1926-2012) was born in Aruba, but lived in Curaçao. She has been poet, actress and literary translator. She did not only produce several collections of Papiamentu poetry, *Bos di sanger* (Voice of the Blood), *Un sinta den bientu* (A Ribbon in the Wind), and *Kantika pa mama tera* (Song for Mother Earth), but also translated many famous plays into Papiamentu, amongst others Tennessee Williams' *The Rose Tattoo* (*E rosa tatuá*) in 1971.

Frank Martinus Arion was born in Curaçao in 1936 and has achieved acclaim both in the Netherlands and the Caribbean through his writings. His first novel, *Sarita mi amor*, was written in Papiamentu. His most noted work is the novel *Dubbelspel* (Double Play) (1973), written in Dutch and subsequently translated into English and in 2011 into Papiamentu by Lucille Berry-Haseth. Among his Papiamentu poems are *Ta amor so por* (Only Love can do that), *M'a kai den sneu* (I Fell in the Snow) and *Ilushon di un anochi* (Illusion of One Night).

Lucille Berry-Haseth of Curaçao is one of the most prominent present-day Papiamentu poets. In 1990 she published a collection of poems *Resonansia* (Resonance) and in 2010 the anthology *So ku palabra* (Alone with words). She is also a co-author (with Aart Broek and Sidney Joubert) of *Pa saka kara*, a three-volume history and anthology of Papiamentu literature.

Diana Lebacks of Curaçao has produced, among others, a modern version of *Nanzi* stories and children's books in Papiamentu. One of her latest works is her first book of poems *Belumbe* (The waterline), published in Papiamentu and Dutch in 2014.

Carel de Haseth (1950-) has many achievements as a poet and novelist in Dutch and Papiamentu. Among his poems in Papiamentu are *Ourore* (Dawn) and *Bida na koló* (Life in colors). In 1988 he wrote a novel in Papiamentu based on the 1795 slave uprising, *Katibu di shon* (A Master's Slave).

Hubert Booi (1919-2014) was born in Bonaire and has worked as a poet, writer and as translator of literature into Papiamentu, including Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (*Un soño di Pascu*). In 1969 he published *Muchila* (Knapsack). In his poems and theatre plays he emphasizes the Amerindian heritage of Aruba, where he lived. In 2006 *Editorial Charuba* published *E flamingo di Aruba* (Aruba's flamingo), an anthology that includes his poetry, theatre texts and prose.

Henry Habibe (1940-), born in Aruba, is, amongst others, the author of studies about Luis H. Daal and Pierre Lauffer. His collections of poems include *Aurora* (Dawn), *Kere kere keresentenchi* (The Truth For Many Isn't Worth a Penny), and *Yiu di tera* (Son of the Land). Together with other students in the Netherlands, he founded *Watapana* (Divi-Divi tree), a magazine devoted to Antillean poetry, especially from a social point of view,

and as a vehicle for publishing poetry for the young Antillean audience. This group of students is described as representing the third milestone in Papiamentu poetry, after Joseph S. Corsen and the Simadán generation.

Federico Oduber (1942-2007) was born in Aruba and is noted for his Papiamentu poems that strike against conformity. Among his best known poems are those published in *Kambio* (Change) and in his collection of poems *Putesia*, in which he uses Papiamentu as an instrument to discuss characteristics typical of the island society. Jossy M. Mansur of Aruba has made numerous translations in Papiamentu of world children's literature, among others *Capa Cora* (Little Red Riding Hood), *Shinishi* (Cinderella) and *Sneublanco* (Snow White). He has also published two volumes of short stories, *E Regreso y Otro Cuentanan* (Coming Back and Other Stories) and *Cuentanan Faborito* (Favourite Stories).

Frank A. Williams of Aruba has produced a novel *E Yamada* (The Calling) in 1987, collections of short stories, like *Regalo di Fantasia* (Fantasy Gift) in 1989, poetry, as in *Antologia di cariño* (Poems of affection) in 1993, and a bilingual historical work about Aruban poetry *Isla di mi* (Island of mine) in 2000. He has also translated and written stage plays in Papiamentu.

A very prolific Papiamentu poet and writer in the Netherlands is the Aruban born Quito Nicolaas. He has published 5 collections of poems, among others *Eclips Político* (Political Eclipse) in 1990 and *Bos pa Planta* (Voices for sowing) in 2011, a collection of short stories *Alameda* in 2008 and two novels, *Tera di Silencio* (Land of silence) in 2004 and *Sombra di recuerdo* (Memory shade) in 2013. He was one of the founders of *Simia Literario*, an Antillean literary group in the Netherlands, whose members have published prose and poetry in Papiamentu.

Franklin D. (Bòl) Antoin of Bonaire has produced two small volumes of short stories *Salu di bida* (Life's salt) in 1987, in which he narrates every day experiences on his native island.

Papiamentu in the Theatre

The rise in stage activity on the ABC islands involving Papiamentu began in the 1940s, with translations from other languages. It reached its peak in the 1960s. Some of the most significant contributions were made by the above-mentioned May Henriquez, who, among others translated Molière's *Le médecin malgré lui* (Ami dokter? Lubidá!) in 1953 and Shakespeare's *The taming of the Shrew* (*Kani mi, pa mi kani bo*) in 1969. Nydia Ecury translated Carlo Goldoni's *Il bugiardo* (*Mentira na Granel*) in 1968 and in 1971 she translated Tennessee Williams' *The Rose Tattoo* (*E rosa tatuá*). Other notable translations were Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (*Ilushon di Anochi*) by Jules de Palm in 1967 and Sophocles' *Antigone* (*Antígona*) by Burny Every, Ramon Todd Dandaré and Pedro Velásquez, presented in the late 1970s by the *Grupo Teatral Arubano* (Aruba's Theatre Group) in Aruba and Curaçao.

Two notable theatre groups were formed in the 1960s: *Mascaruba* of Aruba (1961), and *Thalia* of Curaçao (1967). These groups put on adapted stage plays in Papiamentu, as did another group, the *Sociedad Pro Arte Escenico* (Curaçao) of Eddie Pieters Heyliger, which had been putting on adapted plays in Papiamentu since the early 1950s.

The events of May 30th, 1969 led to an increased desire to assert the own identity. This was one of the reasons for a more prolific production of original works in Papiamentu,

among others by Pacheco Domacassé in Curaçao. In Bonaire, the Grupo Teatral Boneriano, under the directorship of Rudy Domacassé, was very active in the 1980s, producing plays in Papiamentu.

The translation activity did have a beneficial effect in that it widened the scope of activity to which Papiamentu could be applied. The status of the language was enhanced as the number of internationally known works were translated into Papiamentu. As with virtually any language, the development of the written form is a crucial step in the growth of the language itself. Papiamentu-speakers owe a debt of gratitude to the writers, poets, playwrights and others who have used the language in their work.

Mass communication media in Papiamentu

In 1871 the first newspaper in Papiamentu, *Civilisadó* (The Civilizer), was published in Curaçao. The name is self-evident, it was introduced in Papiamentu to civilize the masses. Published weekly, it lasted until 1875. The paper took sides for the emancipation of the former slaves, particularly the education of the children of former slaves, and started a school for that purpose, with Papiamentu as language of instruction.

The first newspaper published in Aruba, appeared in 1890, *El Semanario* (The Weekly), published in Papiamentu, Dutch and Spanish.

In the course of history, since the first periodicals were published in the 19th century, Curaçao as well as Aruba have had many newspapers and other periodicals published, in the beginning in Papiamentu and/or Dutch and/or Spanish, and later on switching exclusively to one language, particularly after the 30th of May, 1969 most exclusively in Papiamentu.

There are still two existing newspapers, whose publication started in the 19th century, the *Amigoe*, which started out in Papiamentu and Dutch to later switch to only Dutch, and the *Curaçaosche Courant*, in Dutch, which is the official gazette in Curaçao. *La Prensa* appeared in Curaçao in 1930 in Spanish and Papiamentu; later Spanish was dropped, and it is still published daily in Papiamentu.

In Aruba there are currently four daily newspapers (*Awe Mainta*; *Bon Dia*, *Aruba*; *Diario* and *Solo di Pueblo*), and four website newspapers (*24ora.com*, *Awe24.com*, *BoletinExtra.com* and *NoticiaCla.com*) completely in Papiamentu. There are five television channels and twelve radio-stations broadcasting exclusively in Papiamentu. In addition, there are newspapers published and radio-stations broadcasting in Dutch, English and Spanish.

In Bonaire there are currently three newspapers: (weekly: *Bon Siman* (Papiamentu / Spanish); monthly: *Avanse* (Papiamentu) and *Esun* (Papiamentu / Dutch), and one website newspaper (*Bonaire Awe*) in Papiamentu. There are two television channels and four radio-stations broadcasting exclusively in Papiamentu. In addition, there are newspapers published and radio-stations broadcasting in Dutch, English and Spanish. In Curaçao there are currently six daily newspapers (*Bala*, *Extra*, *La Prensa*, *Nobo*, *Ultimo Noticia* and *Vigilante*, and three website newspapers (*24ora*, *Turkutin* and *Noticia Rápido*) completely in Papiamentu. There are two television channels and nine radio-stations broadcasting exclusively in Papiamentu. In addition, there is one television channel in Papiamentu / English / Spanish and there are newspapers published and radio-stations broadcasting in Dutch, English and Spanish.

Papiamentu, economy and politics

Industrial revolution started in the Netherlands Antilles in the first quarter of the 20th century. In 1915 the Royal Dutch Shell settled in Curaçao and the oil refinery was put into operation in 1918. In Aruba the oil age began in 1924, a refinery was built in 1927-1931 by Esso/Exxon and the first oil was refined in 1929. Three years after the arrival of the Lago refinery another refinery was established in Aruba, *Arend Petroleum Maatschappij NV*, better known as "Eagle", also owned by the Royal Dutch Shell.

The arrival of the oil industry to these islands didn't only have a socio-economic impact, but a linguistic one as well. The language Papiamentu was greatly influenced by Dutch in Curaçao and by English in Aruba with the introduction of many technical terms and neologisms. This caused the emerging of a richer language as well as of a more notable difference between the two variants. Unfortunately none of these companies accepted Papiamentu as business language, obstructing Papiamentu from becoming a still richer language with a higher status on the islands and abroad.

The arrival of the oil industry was also the start of the *Separacion* movement on the political scene of Aruba. This movement responded in the first place to the increasing influence of the Curaçao and Dutch colonial authorities in the political and administrative life in Aruba. It was an important political response to shifting the balance of power at the expense of the indigenous people of Aruba. The ideals of the movement boiled down to achieve a greater degree of insular autonomy. The separatists argued that the colonial governments put more interest in Aruba as the prosperity of the island rose and Aruba could help pay for the colonial budget and the deficits of the impoverished islands, but it was not compensated by greater influence and/or autonomy of Aruba.

The *separacion* idea was again put into effect as *Status Aparte* by the liberation movement of the 1970's undertaken by the *Movimiento Electoral di Pueblo* (MEP). Partly under influence of the political struggle of the MEP the native Aruban past was pivotal to the national identity of the island. Because the *Status Aparte* movement was dominated by the indigenous people of Aruba, also in relation to the other islands, the identity of the indigenous group was emphasized and promoted.

A clear example of this is the controversy about the orthography of Papiamentu which broke out in the 1970s between Aruba and Curaçao. After May 30, 1969 one of the prominent ideas was that from then on a greater role was to be allocated for Papiamentu in the Netherlands Antilles. Dutch had to be pushed back as governmental and teaching language. One of the most important aspects of this development was the need to standardize Papiamentu: its grammar, vocabulary and orthography. But the two islands could not agree on this last issue. Curaçao chose a mostly phonological spelling, based on pronunciation, while Aruba held tightly to an etymological spelling, based on the origin of the words. This is the reason why the name of the language is *Papiamentu* in Aruba and *Papiamentu* in Curaçao and Bonaire.

That Aruba, apart from linguistic reasons, chose an etymological spelling is no coincidence at all. It was a political decision! The cultural differences between Aruba

and Curaçao must be emphasized, and linguistic differences could be very well used for that purpose.

Emancipation of Papiamentu

As we have seen, Papiamentu became quite early the general language of the ABC islands due to factors already described in this article. The first time the language's name was mentioned as the language of Curaçao was in 1747, during a trial in the United States. As a written language, there are actual remains. The first known document written in Papiamentu is the fragment of the letter of 1775 (see above). In addition to this document, there are two other letters, which (up to now) seem to be the oldest written documents in Papiamentu: a letter of 1783 by a Dutch lady to her Dutch husband and a letter of 26 forest rangers (mostly Indians) in Aruba in 1803. This means that from the end of the 18th century Papiamentu has been a well settled, general language on these islands, spoken as well as written by all ethnic groups.

Due to the efforts - primarily - of the Catholic Church Papiamentu became a language used in education, with the necessary ups and downs, and in publications from the first half of the 19th century up to the present. There are no situations in daily life on the ABC islands where Papiamentu is not used, be it the preacher or the politician, the poet or the sportman, the housewife or the teacher, at home or in the street, in church or in Parliament, at school or in the theatre.

With the revolt of 1969 in Curaçao, which served as an eye opener to the ABC societies, the struggle started to take Papiamentu back to school. Currently Papiamentu is used in all types of education on the islands, be it in one more than in the other. Unfortunately, the result has been that, although we speak the same language on all three islands, there are two different spellings (see above). Our hope is that in the future we may come to only one orthography for the language.

According to the latest census figures (2011) Papiamentu is by far the most widely used language in our societies. More than 80% of the population of Curaçao, 72.3% of people in Bonaire and nearly 70% of Arubans responded that they use Papiamentu as their home language. Dutch is only used in the home by 9.3% of people in Curaçao, 10.4% of people in Bonaire and 6.1% of Arubans. English is employed in the homes of 3.5% of respondents in Curaçao, 4% in Bonaire and 8.1% in Aruba. Finally, Spanish is reported as a home language by 4.6% in Curaçao, 11.4% in Bonaire and 13.2% in Aruba. Other languages are spoken by less than 1% of the population. They include Portuguese, Chinese, Sranan Tongo and French (creole(s)). Moreover, most people who speak Spanish, English and Dutch at home, also claim to speak Papiamentu as their second language. Thus Papiamentu is spoken by about 75 to 80% of the population of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao.

During all the years and centuries of its existence Papiamentu has been standardizing, particularly in writing; since the 19th century dictionaries have been published, mostly bilingual, but at this moment (2014) there is a group in Curaçao working on a monolingual Papiamentu dictionary to be published in the coming years. In May 2003

the Aruban government did make Papiamentu an official language together with Dutch, the Netherlands Antilles followed in 2007 officializing Papiamentu with Dutch and English. Papiamentu, the language of the slaves, has now become the language of everyone and of everywhere, even the university, in Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, and although it is influenced by the other languages, particularly English, it is a language with future.

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Note: All references in the used texts were left out in the article.